Writing Personal Statements for UCAS Teacher Training Applications
Information accurate as of June 2018: make sure you check UCAS regularly & register with this site for updates in case of changes: education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching/subjects-age-groups/why-sign-up

Obtaining school experience is not an entry requirement for teacher training courses like the PGCE. Having some experience in a school can help you decide if teaching is the right career for you and could help to strengthen your application regardless of which route you choose.

Your personal statement is vital to the success of your application and must be well written and have a logical structure. It should also be mistake free, clearly demonstrate your reasons for choosing teaching and your commitment and suitability for it.

Easier said than done in 47 lines – you have to make every word count!

General tips:

- Carefully read the instructions on UCAS before you start.
- You can use up to 4,000 characters (including spaces) or 47 lines of text for your statement.
- Write it in Word first and copy and paste it in. Try writing it in Calibri 12 font – you may need to do some experimenting to get it to fit in as some word processing packages calculate character and line counts differently from the UCAS Teacher Training system; you might need to have a few attempts at redrafting it if it won’t fit. (This is quite common and some students find they have less space than they thought).
- If possible leave a line between paragraphs rather than making it one single block of text – this makes it very hard for admissions tutors to read.
- Spell check and proofread it to make certain that it is absolutely word perfect. Read it aloud to yourself to make sure all of the sentences flow.
- Do not be tempted to copy phrases from someone else’s statement; a friend’s or from the internet. UCAS has sophisticated “Copycatch” systems to spot this.
- Tone - don’t adopt a theoretical/philosophical approach using convoluted language – be concise, natural but professional in tone, and stick to evidence and examples, not waffle!
- Allow plenty of time to draft it and once you’ve finished put it to one side for a few days and then re-read it with “fresh” eyes, this will help you spot errors and any sections that need re-wording.
- Get your final draft checked by an MMU careers consultant if possible or by someone else who is knowledgeable about teaching applications and whose judgement you trust.
What to include:

1) Why do you want to teach? And why that age range/subject?

A short introductory paragraph: What is your motivation? What has influenced your decision to teach? Try and avoid clichés along the lines of “I believe that children are the future”!

**What interests and excites you about this subject or particular age range?**

For primary you need to show an awareness of what you will be teaching and how your qualifications will assist.

For secondary in particular you need to show that you are passionate about your subject area and about transmitting that passion to the young people. How can you demonstrate this?

2) Outline your experience in UK state schools

This is the most important part of your statement. You should not just list what you did (that is the purpose of the work experience section), but what you learnt from it. What has it taught you about the rewards of being a teacher as well as the stresses and strains of the role? Admissions tutors want to see that you have a realistic idea of the job and are looking for your ability to reflect on your time in schools and analyse it.

**Please note:** even if you do not have much/any recent school experience you still need to demonstrate an understanding of the role of a teacher in a UK secondary or primary school and show that you have the skills required.

Some examples of topics that you may have observed, or been involved in yourself:

- Lesson planning – why is this important?
- Classroom management – pupils’ behaviour, groupings, resources, pastoral care.
- Inclusion/diversity issues – how do teachers ensure all children are treated equally and their individual needs met? How are special educational needs dealt with and what about pupils with English as an additional language?
- The role of ICT/whiteboards etc. – how do they enhance classroom learning?
- The National Curriculum, current national strategies.
- How are parents included?
- How does the teacher work with the other professionals in the room, e.g. teaching assistants etc.?

When you’re giving examples of specific lessons, you may have observed or helped out with, you could use the **STARR** technique to give a fully evidenced example: Eg:

**Situation:** When I was at …… school in a year …. class

**Task:** What was the learning objective of the lesson/activity?

**Action:** How did the teacher/you communicate the idea & engage the children – what methods were used?

**Result:** How did it go? How did you/the teacher evaluate how it went?
Reflect: What did you learn from this, what would you do differently next time?

3) What skills do you have that will make you an effective teacher?
Include some of these within your description of your time spent in schools or carrying out other activities. For example:
- Organising skills
- Communication skills
- Empathy with young people
- Creativity
- Energy, resilience and enthusiasm
- Commitment to life-long learning

4) Explain the relevance of your previous education & show that you understand that teacher training is an intensive course
How does your degree relate to the subject that you intend to teach? How will the skills and knowledge gained help you in the classroom? (Research the National Curriculum so you know what you’ll be teaching!)

Are there any particular modules or projects that relate to the curriculum? Emphasise IT skills gained. If you are applying for Primary and have taken a non-National Curriculum degree but do have some National Curriculum subjects at ‘A’ level it could be appropriate to talk about these.

You also need to demonstrate that you understand that a PGCE is a rigorous and challenging course.

5) Do you have any other experience with young people of the relevant age?
Have you done any: coaching, tutoring, mentoring, student ambassador assignments, other work with children’s groups, e.g. Brownies? Emphasise any leadership roles or any activities where you were communicating ideas and motivating young people.

6) Highlight any other relevant work
Have you had any other jobs that are worth mentioning? Which transferable skills have you developed from them - e.g. planning, time management, teamwork, problem solving etc.?

7) What are your hobbies and interests? Any achievements you could mention?
Do you have any other skills that would be useful as a teacher and could make your form stand out? - e.g. sport, music, art, language skills, drama, computing. Do you have any hobbies that would “add-value” to a school and could make a great contribution to the school community/out-of-school clubs etc.? This type of skill/achievement can really get the admissions tutors interested in you as it demonstrates a bit of personality and positively differentiates you from other candidates.

8) What are your ambitions for your future in teaching?
A very short conclusion: What is your goal for your teaching career? Where do you see
Useful Further Resources

- The teacher training section of the UCAS site contains lots of useful information to help you complete your form: ucas.com/ucas/teacher-training/apply-and-track/your-personal-statement
- For examples of statements and lots of useful advice: kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/pgcestatements.htm
- Research the National Curriculum: education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum
- Target Jobs Teaching Section: targetpostgrad.com/subjects/teaching-and-education/how-to-write-your-personal-statement-for-teacher-training
- Which? University info: university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements/personal-statement-advice-teacher-training-education

Careers & Employability Service Support

The Careers & Employability Service offers a range of support to Manchester Met students and graduates:

- Detailed careers guides: Access our full range of careers guides our website.
- Ask a Careers Question Online: Get online advice through My Career Hub, ask your question at any time and receive support via email.
- Careers Consultant Appointments: Book a 30 minute appointment to discuss or review your application with a Careers & Employability Consultant.
- Careers Events: Meet employers and enhance your employability by attending our workshops, employer events and careers fairs.
- Term-Time Drop-Ins: Brooks 1.40
  Applications Drop-In Wednesday 1-3 / Careers Guidance Drop-In Thursday 10-3

For more information visit mmu.ac.uk/careers